

Recovery Now

The Forum for the DBH Consumer

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META's Five Pathways of Recovery

There can be said to be five pathways to recovery that were briefly mentioned in the previous article they are as follows: Hope, Choice, Empowerment, Environment, and Spirituality. Here I would like to explore each pathway as it would be relevant to individual recovery. Hope is the quality that helps us persevere no matter what, we turn to hope and keep it alive with our positive efforts and good intentions. Hope honors little steps and soothes us when we take a step back. Hope is with us at the peak of our success and still abides when despite all of our efforts things do not go as well as we had planned.

Choice can empower us and continued use of this pathway can give us a sense of who we are. When we surrender our power of choice we become dependant upon the choices of others and thus experience dependence and even learned helplessness. When we do use this valuable tool we begin to take control of our lives, we understand that little choices practiced daily lead us to reach goals that we never thought possible. Using the power of choice we need to be persistent and patient

with ourselves. We are beginning to find out who we are and what we are capable of.

Empowerment is the process of finding our voice, of accepting challenges and moving out of our comfort zone. Like the power of choice, empowerment gives us our center back. We are no longer satisfied with being kicked around and feeling powerless. Taking control and empowerment means that we are now part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Empowerment is not easy and it may be a very long journey, however the rewards of this path may include, effective and positive influence of our environment, working with other for positive change, and being in control and learning self reliance.

It can be said that a recovery environment is the best indicator of continued recovery. Environment can give us a sense of community; it is where we can find support and encouragement. Where our will power fails, environment can move us forward. We are all familiar with what a bad environment can do to our recovery efforts. How-

ever a good recovery environment can move us forward and can contribute to the effective use of all the pathways of recovery. Many think that it is the strong independent individual that recovers. However the truth is that people that recover are the ones that use their support network along with their own efforts. Environment as a pathway should not be underestimated.

Spirituality is a principle pathway for many in recovery from mental illness and/or drug and alcohol challenges. It is the process of getting in touch with yourself and or a higher power, of using "the force" to face challenges and obstacles. Spirituality is unique for each of us as we are all unique as human being and individuals. Each of us can be called upon to find his or her path that may include the pathway of spirituality. Some find the formal religion and church are very helpful and give meaning and purpose to everyday life. Others find this meaning in a personal quest that may include such things as service to others, meditation, and finding a personal center to face life.



META Training a Personal Testimony

I learned so much from the META training. I wish everyone in the county system could take this class...not just peers but staff as well. I believe they would get so much out of it. I know that some staff already know about the recovery model and engage in recovery language and peer behavior but more people need to know what we learned. I thought I was doing well, but during and after my training, I realized I was doing great and going far in my recovery. Chris Martin was a great trainer with endless energy. This helped me when I was tired. He modeled recovery as only one other I've seen.

The things I learned I've been able to immediately apply in all my conversations even with myself. I see situations differently and am

more optimistic. Besides my normal WRAP plan, I've been able to use my new behaviors and information to do better in my new way of thinking and new way of acting. In other words, thanks for the chance to learn more and start down the most important path of recovery. This was a three unit university level course in two weeks and we all had to move out of our comfort zones and meet the challenge on day at a time. It was well worth the effort being immersed in learning the language of recovery and empowerment. I have never learned so much in so little time. Thanks again to DBH



Medical Model to the Recovery Model

The old medical model of DBH viewed their clients from a deficit point of view. The system viewed its clients as people who were sick and needed our help and guidance. The most that was hoped for, as a rule, was that a person's symptoms were managed and that they would be stabilized they maintained a reasonable level of functioning.

The recovery model however focuses on the individual's quality of life, and believes that all can recover and enjoy a quality of life that they aspire too. The individual is viewed in a positive light where strengths are used as tools for positive change, and choice is seen as within the power of the individual. An example of the importance of choice to the person in recovery is as follows:

You're are in a restaurant and order your favorite meal-steak and lobster-as a reward for a job well done. The waiter takes your order, but returns from the kitchen and reports that they have had a staff meeting in the kitchen and that the chef is an expert on nutrition and has decided that a watercress sandwich and green tea is what you should have. This story points out how important choice is to each individual. People with a diagnosis are no different.

There are five pathways to recovery that are as follows: hope, choice, empowerment, spirituality, and environment. As we move into the recovery model more and more consumers will move into one or more of these five pathways. As I have attended many

Client Forum

The room was filled with over 400 peers who were there to empower each other and learn how to move from the involvement in decision making to real leadership roles within the mental health system. The conference focus was "**Clients as Leaders = Real Transformation**". That was the saying for this year on buttons as well as t-shirts that were sold at the forum. .Department of Behavioral Health sent ten consumers to represent San Bernardino County. There were many great keynote speakers. Mariette Hartley, star of stage, screen, and television, gave an inspired speech about her own struggle with depression and trauma. She stated that one's

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conferences and trainings this year, I am meeting a significant number of my peers that have recovered from mental illness, or are taking recovery seriously. The consumer movement has now gone international and like the civil rights movement and the women's movement is making a difference in empowering peers at all levels for more humane services. This summer there is in the planning stage an important meeting of consumers that receive DBH services. The recovery model looks at the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. We are not problems or things that need to be fixed we are people first, and aspire to full citizenship within our community and society.

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Honoring Diversity

One of the cornerstones to getting along with others who are different from us is to be non-judgmental. No one likes to be judged, people like to be validated for their uniqueness as human beings. Diversity is what makes us strong, where there is acceptance and a willingness to learn and appreciate. We all are familiar with situations where diversity is not honored and the deep harm that it can do, on the other side diversity honored can build community and positive environments.

Honoring diversity is to honor the diversity in ourselves. All the facets that make us unique are important. If we do not honor this it will be hard to be accepting of others who are different from us. If we are open to others we will always be open to learning new things and ideas. It can be said that the mind works like a parachute; it can only help us if it

is open.

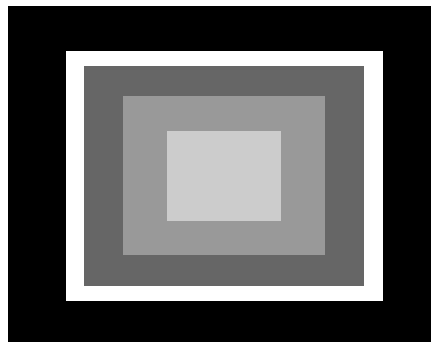
People with mental illness have their own unique culture that is becoming more and more positive and diverse. Recovery is touching lives in a way where ten years ago it was not thought possible. We need to appreciate and honor this culture and these steps forward and the unique contribution that many are making to the system and society in general. We are not just treating sick people, we are honoring unique individuals with a great deal to offer and that have demonstrated great courage, perseverance, and creativity.

In serving people with a diagnosis it is not our job to convince them to be like us, or to have similar belief system or orientations that are like ours. What is validating is to receive encouragement to be more of who they are. I volunteer in a clubhouse where there are many cultural, ethnic, sexual orientations, etc... represented. The atmosphere that we have created through consistent positive effort is one that honors the individual and values his or her unique contribution. Each is accepted without judgment and encouraged to be not what we want them to be, not what we think they should be but who they are. Diversity is what builds strength within this unique culture, as within any other culture. We all need to keep an open mind and be willing to work with each other as we move into the Recovery Model.

The 2007 Client Forum (Continued)

deepest wound once integrated can become our greatest strength. We also heard from three of the founders of the consumer movement who spoke on the history and the future of the movement. Their courage and strength of conviction rang out with each speech. There were many workshops to choose from that were principally run by consumer leaders from throughout the state. It was a three day conference and we all had plenty of time to make new friends and network with other peers from other counties. Our own San Bernardino Mental Health Director, Allen Rawland, MSW, was a panelist who made himself

available to answer questions about accountability to the promises of the Mental Health Act and Policy from client presenters and attendees. All peers returned to San Bernardino County having learned a great deal about ourselves and what it will take to transform the system and make recovery a choice for all who suffer from mental illness.



Wellness and Recovery Committee Update

Greetings from Bob Sudol, Co-Chair of the Wellness/Recovery Committee:

There has been so much happening on the DBH's consumer's part in the Recovery activities that it's hard to get it all down in a few brief sentences. Ten consumers attending the California Network conference in LA in January; 21 consumers attending the Wellness/Recovery conference in Riverside in February; 20 consumers completing an intensive 2 week, 5 days a week recovery/empowerment

training in San Bernardino in March; 75 consumers over in Upland at the Wellness/Recovery committee meeting and clubhouse socialization event; hundreds of new members signed up at the clubhouses; 60 consumers/family members interviewed in March for the new Peer/Family Advocate positions and dozens of recovery groups, activities, trainings and other events in the clinics, clubhouses and recovery centers. As I have visited all the recovery and clubhouse programs, I have observed

an energy and excitement by, for and with consumers that is going to be the foundation of a transformation in the way San Bernardino DBH provides services to its customers at all levels. The consumers are ready to change their lives, join us in the workforce and now it is up to staff to do our part and learn and participate in the Wellness Model that has been so effective in helping patients become functioning people again back in the community.

Transformation of Victor Valley Clubhouse

Victor Valley Clubhouse had fallen on hard times, attendance was down and staff and clients had forgotten the promise of the recovery model. However as with every set back there is the seed of a comeback and new growth and prosperity. Harold Heinz came on board a number of months ago, and the once booming clubhouse began to gain ground. Harold believed in empowering clients, so together they can up with new goals and their first 90 day plan. In 90 days they elected motivated officers, set

up many new client run groups, such as men's group, women's group, motivation group, etc... They established a lunch program that offers meals four days a week. Now remember, this was all done in 90 days, rather amazing, the seeds of recovery had begun to germinate. Their daily attendance went from 12 to 35.

Their second 90 day plan was now ready to take shape. This included accessing monies from the MHSA for Clubhouse expansion. That gave

them new carpet, new major appliances, and new computers. They held a bake sale that netted them 100.00 dollars, and now have a consumer night each month where friends and family are welcome, this includes a speaker and a meal. Setting and meeting these goals and others shows what partnerships between staff and peers within the philosophy of recovery can accomplish. They now have a very positive recovery environment that indicates continued growth and positive outcomes for all clients con-

News from T.E.A.M. House

Since the last newsletter Team House consumers have been participating in a lot of events involving both fun and Recovery activities. About 110 consumers participated in the annual Xmas party and visit from Santa. In January, our Director Allan Rawland joined over 50 clubhouse members at Team House to view a video on stigma and then participated in a panel discussion on this topic. In February we had a Valentine's Day celebration and a St. Patty's Day and Easter celebration in March and April. Team House consumers also continue to give back to the community by running a food bank, lunch program for the homeless and a

clothes closet. The consumer kitchen crew average 600 hot lunches a month made and served to anyone hungry and distributed over 400 food baskets in a 3 month period. The clothes closet crew collected and distributed over 500 clothes articles to needy individuals over that same 3 month period and numerous consumers helped each other get rides, find housing, apply for programs and connect to community resources. In appreciation of our consumer's volunteer work, Doris Turner of the local NAMI chapter sponsored a special dinner and took 15 consumers to a professional musical at the historic downtown theatre in San Bernardino

on a March evening that was a treat for all involved. Other activities have included Garnet Magnus from Protection and Advocacy coming to Team House 2x a week to offer classes in Voting Rights, Civic Participation and Peer Self-Advocacy for a six week series. Finally Frank Ibarra from Adult Education started a 10 week, 40 hour job training class at Team House leading to a Consumer Readiness Certificate that meets the requirements for Level I Peer/Family Advocate application. Over 40 consumers participated on Friday mornings with nearly 40 consumers graduating and receiving their certificate in April.